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COMMONWEAL

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Labor Day—1941

CLASSIFYING LABOR as a separate sector of the American population, as Marxists do, always tends to strain the facts and oversimplify social complexities. Class unity is not the only unity, and class war is not the only war. The present is a time of such intense over-all strain in America that the peculiar position of labor loses relative importance in a consideration of the situation of everybody. In the President's address, the position of labor as a class is almost incidental:

> our vast effort, and the unity of purpose that inspires that effort, are due solely to our recognition of the fact that our fundamental rights, including the rights of labor, are threatened by Hitler's violent attempt to rule the world. . . . And the rights of free labor could not survive without the rights of free enterprise. . . . We know that one of the first acts of the Axis dictatorships has been to wipe out all the principles and standards which labor had been able to establish for its own preservation and advancement. Just as he [Hitler] denies all rights to individuals he must deny all rights to groups—groups of labor, of business, groups of learning, of the Church. . . .

For a Labor Day speech, these quotations seem to underestimate the clash of class interests in America and exaggerate the unity of all groups—a kind of hyperbole, incidentally, which his conservative enemies have always considered lacking in President Roosevelt's language. But labor was not the chief topic of the address.

The war anniversary took precedence, and there were two important statements of the Administration's foreign policy. President Roosevelt said:

> I know that I speak the conscience and determination of the American people when I say that we shall do everything in our power to crush Hitler and his nazi forces.

This statement leaves several terms vague, but the plain meaning of "everything in our power" plainly goes far beyond anything which the American people have indicated they are determined upon. Neither the last elections, the actions of Congress nor the popular polls have given the least indication that the American people are determined to carry the war policy as far as it is obviously within our power to do. When did it become apparent, for instance, that in order "to crush nazi forces" the people would accept a total-war domestic régime, with all it would imply if it were to summon "everything," and would approve the sending of an army abroad and agree to national action all over the world which would have the ruthless maximum effect toward crushing Hitler? It appears to us clearly wrong to assume that the American people want everything without restriction done to eliminate completely the régime in Germany. Just what restrictions the country wants is not known. Few of those who are doing most of the talking about the war really seem to want it known how far the people believe the country should go and where they think it should stop. The last we heard, they wanted to stop short of war.

The President's address ruled out efforts toward a negotiated peace.

> There are a few appeasers and nazi sympathizers who . . . even ask me to negotiate with Hitler—to pray for crumbs from his victorious table. . . . This course I have rejected —I reject it again.

The problem of negotiation seems to us much more complicated than this speech makes out. Would the present administration negotiate with *any* German régime? We assume that the spirit of the Eight Points would compel us to work for a multilateral settlement, accepting German partners—in spite of the fact that Churchill apparently would like to see the German side come disarmed and the British side well "protected." But what kind of negotiation and what kind of régime? Neither will spring up spontaneously until we make much clearer what we want. The English and American governments must be franker and clearer and much better propagandists about peace settlements.

There appears also a contradiction in the administration attitude toward some rather-difficult-to-conceive negotiation with Hitler. It is rejected out-of-hand, not only as "a compromise with evil itself," but also as "appeasement" of a victor. Isn't continuing the war "compromising with evil"? Isn't continuing the blockade, destroying lives, leveling cities, permitting the loss and devastation of small countries like Poland and Jugoslavia and the rest, destroying and wasting the world's resources, encouraging war psychology—doesn't the whole wide-world situation occasioned

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by pressing the war contain within itself certain elements of evil? Then this: if negotiation would be appeasement, if we would be simply looking for crumbs from a victor's table, if Hitler is assumed to be so overpowering that he would take everything and give nothing, is it not crazy to carry on the war? But if this assumption of Hitler's invincible strength and our helpless weakness is false, then the negotiated settlement would be arrived at and enforced by the strength of Hitler's enemies. If there is enough strength to fight, logically there should be enough strength to talk. It is a complicated question, too shortly slurred over, and surely the government should continue constantly studying it.

No New Device

OF ALL the weapons of coercion, the most abject is that of holding a whole social group responsible for the acts of individuals who may (or may not) belong to the group held responsible. Vom Rath is shot by a Jew; at once thousands of Jews in Germany are bullied, stripped of their property, beaten up. A German officer is stabbed in the Metro, and the French are warned that in future such deeds will result in the execution of some indefinite number of men, commensurate with the rank of the assaulted German.

People who use this weapon, of course, don't take very seriously the Kantian criterion that men must never be treated merely as means but always as ends. They are scarcely ardent devotees of Saint Paul's doctrine of the mystical body. They are tough and realistic and unsentimental. Sometimes they are just plain angry. But whatever they are, their action inspires a feeling of helplessness in mankind, a feeling of hopelessness physical in its impact. And their action serves to remind that those who would have man rather than law govern "add a wild animal." Our complacency, our optimism is disturbed; that at least is some small compensation—if there can be compensation for horror.

Will Returning Soldiers Get a Job?

FROM TIME TO TIME mention is made of post-war planning throughout the nation to reduce to a minimum the dislocation and disturbances occasioned by mustering out of the army large numbers of employable men. It may be recalled that at the end of the last war Canada achieved considerable success through a dominion-wide road-building program. In this country in the 1940's no such simple solution is at hand and the need for comprehensive planning for this period of transition is acute. Moreover, there is always the danger that the fear of what would follow the abrupt ending of a war economy tends to influence a nation's foreign policy in the more aggressive direction. For these and other reasons it is heartening to learn from the National Resources Board that 52 cities in 19 states have already begun "long-range programming on public works" based on the recent experience of cities that have tried it. First, community needs for the next 5 or 6 years are lined up in order of preference. Then available funds are studied. From there on feasible projects are decided on for a year at a time. The same date as the publication of this report Brigadier General Lewis B. Hershey, Director of Selective Service, called upon American business to cooperate in providing jobs for the 200,000 men to be released from active service before the end of 1941. By law a number of these men are to be reinstated in their own or similar jobs, but a number of them were unemployed when they joined the service or their employer has since ceased to function. Further assistance is provided in the instructions and forms for personal qualification supplied to each man completing his army term. Coordinated efforts for these first draftees can lead to building up sound techniques for returning great numbers of soldiers to civil life.

A Plea to Mr. Morgenthau

THE armament program creates one problem for the government: financing today and tomorrow, preventing inflation, etc., etc. After a decade of spasmodic employment and intermittent relief many an American now finds himself steadily employed at high wages. Now that for a while the day to day pressure of subsistence is relaxed, is there anything he can do to provide for the family's future security? Or will the $10,000,000,000 in added wages and salaries currently recorded go entirely for immediate consumption?

The 40 percent rise in department store sales for August, ascribed to fear of coming shortages, must also be a reflection of the nation's new found purchasing power. When the expected shortages of such staples as household furnishings, home appliances, certain types of clothing, automobiles and other articles sets in, will not many families continue in a buying mood?

The future is so dim that financial experts are taking diametrically opposed positions on what lies ahead. Hard times appear inevitable, but when will the next crash be set off? American soldiers and sailors and airmen may be needed for a vast amount of policing long after hostilities have ceased. Real demobilization is possibly a long way hence.

In the face of this uncertainty there are a few discernible truths. Additional income can be wisely used today for building the health of the family. More fresh fruits and vegetables; visits to the dentist and the doctor can contribute to this end. It is difficult to go beyond this. In the ideal, factory workers could be encouraged to make down

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payments on new homes built on enough land to produce vegetables for the family larder. But taking on of such a fixed obligation for any period of years is probably the very means whereby a householder would get stuck. And should he buy more life insurance from a sound company, or hedge against inflation by investing in jewelry from a reliable firm, or play things both ways by acquiring some of both? What about investing in learning special skills for one or more civilian trades conceivably in demand in more peaceable times? There have been few more auspicious occasions for an officially sponsored educational campaign telling citizens how to spend money.

No More Bronze Doors

ON THE DAY President Roosevelt announced the Rosenman plan for coordinating defense production he said that priorities will not only work hardship for civilian every-day needs but may lead to "some shut-downs or curtailment of work in some factories which manufacture non-defense materials." A few days later news leaked out of an OPM list of over 40 industries, with "thousands" of factories, which will have to shut down almost entirely. All this adds up to the probability of large unemployment in the near future. Leo M. Cherne of the Research Institute of America views the prospect as deeply disturbing. The "starvation" under the priorities system, he says, will "make priorities unemployment almost as dramatic before the end of this year as the headlines of 1933." Such a view is probably exaggerated, but inevitably there will be dislocation, and there will be some unemployment—perhaps a great deal. A tremendous bulk of investment will cease making profits, or be unable to pay fixed interest charges.

Here is a specimen of what will happen. The depression has already cut down the number of fine bronze casters, metal carvers, chasers, repoussé workers. Now that there is once more money to spend on such things, for churches, public buildings, monuments, the fine metal shops are having to close up for lack of materials. The skilled workers will go into defense production, and largely be lost to their old crafts. No more bronze doors.

If priorities unemployment should become as serious as Mr. Cherne—and others—foresees, the nation will be faced with more government spending (for relief) and with at least a short period of deflation, rather than the inflation which so alarms Mr. Henderson.

Labor and Education and Effort

A LABOR DAY speech given before the Omaha Central Labor Union by Father John C. Friedl, S.J., opened up some ideas and gave an example which would certainly be valuable in circulation. Father Friedl began by trying to make his hearers really face revolutionary change, without panic, without evasion and with a positive reaction which can preserve good and avoid evil:

> The note of emergency about our foreign affairs is but a momentary distraction from those greater long-range problems of our international life which clamor for solution. . . . Before all else we must recognize that we are entering a new era. Things will never again be just as they were. . . . "There is no denying," he [Pope Pius XI] said three years ago, "that the world has entered upon one of those transition periods, of unrest, of questioning, of disorientation and conflict which have been well described as turning points of history." . . . Our only hope is that we will meet it intellectually, spiritually and psychologically prepared.

The address does not pretend to give a blueprint of what must be done to make everything wonderful. It insists upon the obligation of labor in particular to study intelligently and with system and consistency the principles and the practical steps:

> Labor unions must learn to broaden their vision and extend their program of action. "We shall never solve the problems of industrial peace, justice and good social order until labor unions assume a larger share of the responsibility for the welfare of the total community." Far from being a subversive influence union organization can be the strong bulwark of the democracy which today we are being called upon to defend with our best efforts, with our experience and, if need be, with our lives. . . . Our problem is to restore human affairs in this country to a satisfactory state without sacrificing the essential framework of our democracy. . . . This takes study; and study takes time and sacrifice.

Father Friedl told about the Institute for Social Reconstruction of Rockhurst College in Kansas City, of which he is director. In three years' time, the Institute has developed three major divisions: Undergraduate; Adult After-Training; Service. The "adult after-training" is carried on through a forum for the clergy, through a labor school offering a curriculum of academic and semi-academic studies, enabling labor "to meet the threat of impending change intelligently," and, finally, through conferences for employers. The "service" division of the Institute assists in the arbitration of grievances between management and unions and offers an advisory and consultative service. It undertakes public education through publicity and special events, the most notable so far having been the national symposium on the fiftieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum. (How can Catholics be stimulated to energy in their unions?) "You have to begin right here, in your every day living which revolves around your job and the craft you engage in, and more particularly right in your own local union which is supposed to be the democratic expression of the one common interest which unites you into a fraternal group rooted in justice and charity."

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Tata Vasco

A Mexican opera based on the life of a great religious hero.

By Otto Mayer-Serra

A FEW weeks ago Catholic Mexico had the satisfaction of seeing its most brilliant composer, recently kicked out the back door of the state-owned Palace of Fine Arts, triumphantly ushered in once again through the main entrance. For with the performance of Miguel Bernal's "Noche en Morelia" by the Orquesta Sinfónica de México, the shabby treatment accorded him by the Mexican Ministry of Education several months ago can be considered righted.

For almost an entire week last March the walls of Mexico City were plastered with posters announcing the production of Bernal's opera, "Tata Vasco," in the Palace of Fine Arts. And then nothing more was heard of the scheduled performance. This first major Mexican opera to be written in a quarter of a century had been compelled to take refuge in the Teatro Arbeu, a rickety structure reminiscent of days when Mexican operas were less rare. The unusual acclaim accorded the work, rather than helping to erase the episode from the public mind, gave it new importance. It was clear to everyone that "Tata Vasco" had become entangled in the old controversy between the Church and the Mexican state. The Minister of Education, undoubtedly sensing something of a rebuke in the record crowds that packed the Teatro Arbeu, issued a statement justifying the banishment of the opera from the Palace of Fine Arts on the ground that its subject matter encouraged an undesirable mysticism.

More than a mere historical figure, Michoacan's first bishop, Don Vasco de Quiroga ("Tata Vasco") is a legend. Following on the heels of Nuño de Guzman, he won the Indians with Christian charity where the cruelty of that conquistador had failed. He organized settlements of Indians according to occupation, introduced communal labor, the six-hour day, collective property; at a time when the Indians elsewhere in Mexico were being reduced to slavery, he realized the social gospel of the primitive Church. Handicrafts, letters, music and painting flourished in an atmosphere of piety and brotherly love. Michoacan has never relinquished the lead given it by Tata Vasco. The University of Morelia is the oldest in the country; the Church in Michoacan has remained in the van of cultural effort. "Every honor shown the memory of Don Vasco," Manuel M. Ponce, the dean of Mexican music, has written, "is but a contribution to the monument that the revolutionary Mexico of today owes him."

The "Tata Vasco" incident came at a most crucial moment in the religious life of Mexico. Since the new President declared himself a believer—the first chief magistrate to do so in decades—Mexico's Catholics have harbored the hope that the official attitude toward the Church would undergo a radical change. For in recent years the work of the Church has been beset with extraordinary hardships. To overcome the obstacles placed in the way of training priests, divinity students were sent to the Montezuma Seminary in New Mexico, directed by Mexican Jesuits and supported by American Catholics. The Bishop of Sonora State even sought refuge in the mountains with his seminarists. There they led the hardy life of pioneers, constructing their own cabins, cultivating the land by day and pursuing their studies at night. Article 3 of the Mexican Constitution, directed against "fanaticism" and setting forth a "scientific" basis for education, was used to eliminate Catholic instructors from private schools.

Today the juridical position of Catholic instructions remains unchanged, but the letter of the law is not receiving the same ruthless interpretation as in the days of Cardenas. Since Camacho's assumption of office, there has not been a single case of confiscation of the goods of the clergy. Rather recently the President's influential brother, Maximino, attended the Mass for the repose of his mother's soul in Puebla Cathedral, and was present again when his nine-year-old son received his First Communion from the Archbishop. A photo of Maximino alongside the Archbishop appeared in the press. Last June the Eucharistic Congress in Chihuahua organized an immense open-air procession—an unthinkable event under Cardenas.

Not the Ministry of Education

These new trends of tolerance, however, have not yet penetrated to the Ministry of Education, where Cardenist elements are entrenched. It was because of this that "Tata Vasco" found the doors of the Palace of Fine Arts closed to it. What is rather inexplicable is that the Minister, Señor Ponton, was present at the Patzcuaro première of the opera, and is reported to have offered

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Bernal three railway coaches to make possible the appearance of the company at the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City.

Since the librettist of "Tata Vasco," Father Manuel Muñoz, has dedicated himself to historical studies rather than to the theater, it is not surprising that his text should suffer from serious shortcomings. The scarcity of dramatic episodes and the predominance of narrative and dialogue give the work the character of an oratorio rather than an opera.

Bernal has coped successfully with the weakness of the libretto, and has revealed a complete mastery of his medium. The various episodes of the opera are conceived within classical forms. Thus the culminating passage on the discourse of Vasco to the Indians is constructed along the lines of a grandiose fugue. In the last part, entitled *El Civilizador,* nothing less than a symphony in four movements is tucked away. Indeed in its use of instrumental forms "Tata Vasco" shows a certain parallelism with the operas of the Austrian Alban Berg. But here the analogy ceases. While Berg, operating with the resources of the Schoenberg school, pressed boldly into new territory, Bernal is perfectly content to remain on beaten paths.

The composer himself has formulated his intentions in writing the score as follows: "The reading of Thomas Mann's 'Magic Mountain,' which seems to condense in its pages the entire culture of our epoch, led me to attempt something similar in the field of music." Such a program, *tour de force* though it be, inevitably leads to eclecticism. In the lyric high-spots of the work Bernal invariably lapses into the well-known idiom of Puccini. At more epic moments, Tchaikovsky shows through. The music to the opening scene of the second part, where Indian children are at play, is reminiscent of passages of Moussorgsky. Not even the Palestrinian *motet,* the art of the troubadours, Gregorian chant and the Bach chorale —all handled with signal competence—are left unrepresented. Mexican dances, too, occur in this European context, but as individual numbers playing no part in the development of the score.

Bernal has up to now turned his back on the nationalist trend in Mexican music. He clearly seeks his inspiration in early colonial times—the most glorious period of the Mexican Church. His religious idealism does not permit him to follow in the footsteps of the late Silvestre Revueltas, Mexico's greatest composer, who based his writings on the popular music of his country's taverns, fairs and burlesque shows. Nor for that matter could the writings of Carlos Chavez, who attempts to reconstruct the pagan rites of the pre-Conquest Indians, serve him as a model. Like the great religious chroniclers of the sixteenth century, Bernal sees in the Indian an object for Christian charity and conversation.

Bernal himself has expressed his attitude towards Mexican musical nationalism in the following words: "Must we elevate to a dogma everything done by indigenous and *mestizo* music? Popular art is intuitive art and must perforce contain its weakness as well as its merits. What is essential therefore is a criterion of selection. Indeed, all composers who have undertaken to realize a nationalist musical ideal have carried out such a selection. What is inexcusable is to adopt the worst features of native music and try palming them off as the only possible good music—much after the fashion of those painters who have as their esthetic ideal to banish all beauty and paint only what is ugly. (I wonder whether they adopt the same criterion when they pick wives for themselves.) To aim at a faithful reflection of everything done by popular music would be musical photography and not musical creation."

It is in truly prophetic terms that Bernal reads the future of music, particularly religious music. "After the present cataclysm it seems that the new middle ages predicted by some historians must come. And in this new spiritual era all the arts —above all music—will take on a religious complexion. Will this mean the disappearance of secular art? By no means. The middle ages also had their *Jeux* and miracle plays and troubadours. The regeneration of liturgical music will be achieved when church musicians will cease being inferior to their secular colleagues. We must not insult God by assuming Him to be less demanding than our concert public."

No one can doubt for a moment that Mexican religious music, like the entire cultural activity of the Church, is experiencing an upswing. In both cases this has been largely the result of individual efforts. Seventeen years ago Canon José María Villaseñor founded a small choir in one of the churches of Morelia. Thanks to his unparalleled self-abnegation, this developed into the most important high school of sacred music in the Republic. For the first time in the history of Mexico, thoroughgoing courses in every aspect of religious music were given — modelled, indeed, after the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome, where three of the instructors had completed their studies. The work of the school was surrounded with every manner of hardship; on one occasion its entire equipment was confiscated by the Mexican Government. Nevertheless the school has survived and flourished—thanks to the exertion of its founders and the support of the Michoacan Church. For the past three years it has published a printed organ, *Schola Cantorum,* which, until the appearance of a similar publication in Brazil, was unique in Latin America.

In 1939 these efforts culminated in the organization of the First National Congress of Religious Music. A central Commission of Mexican Sacred

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Music was set up by the national episcopate "to work for the resurgence of music in the churches of Mexico"—a belated echo of the famous Encyclical on religious music issued by Pius X in 1903. The section of poliphony and chorus is headed by Miguel Bernal.

Bernal owes his entire musical education to the Church. Born in Morelia in 1910, he received his first musical instruction in the Children's School attached to Morelia Cathedral. Later he was enrolled in what is now the high school of sacred music. His first composition was written at the age of eleven—a motet, "Assumpta est Maria." He spent five years at the Pontifical Institute of Music in Rome to which he was sent by Canon José M. Villaseñor, and was the first of its pupils to complete his studies in all three courses—Gregorian Chant, Musical Composition and Organ. Since 1933 he has lived in Morelia, devoting himself to the direction of the choir of the high school of sacred music, to composition, to church and concert organ performances, and to musicological writings. In addition to "Tata Vasco," his works include a "Colonial Quartet," a "Symphonic Suite," compositions for organ and chorus and the "Noche en Morelia." Bernal, a modest young man, lives entirely immersed in his work. He is married to a descendant of the Mexican Emperor Iturbide.

There can be little doubt that Bernal will succeed in striking a happy balance between the popular trends in Mexican music and the European and liturgical influences which predominate in his present work.

Volunteer Pilots for Peter's Bark

A conservative criticism of those who would identify the Church with parties in the War

By **Florence D. Cohalan**

IN AN international struggle like the present war, it is inevitable that the support of the Church should be desired and sought by the belligerents, and that Catholics on both sides should plead for and endeavor to justify the blessing of their common mother on their strife and aims. Since America is the only great Western power not formally a belligerent, propaganda to enlist the support of the American Catholics on one side or the other is being feverishly pressed. We cannot blame non-Catholic forces, whose very existence is in jeopardy, for their effort to use the Church to their own advantage. Catholics, however, should beware of propaganda that would enlist the Church on either side, for many of her ardent suitors of today were disdainful enemies yesterday. Propagandists for the Allies assert that American Catholics have a moral obligation to support the Allies and that in consequence they should urge the immediate entry of the United States into the war. This dangerous simplification of the issues at stake has been accepted by a small group of Catholics whose zeal for the Allied cause has blinded them to the perils to which its adoption would expose the Church.

This propaganda is illustrated by an advertisement recently inserted in the Catholic press by the Fight For Freedom Committee. It is addressed to American Catholics, and in shrill, if not hysterical, tones insists that the interests of the Church demand America's entry into the war. It appeals for members for the FFF organization and asks them to sign the sweeping pledge to "support any action towards the end of defeating Hitler." The theoretical and practical objections to this policy are many and serious. The moral argument is a dangerous one to invoke, for once the principle is established there is no escape from its conclusions and compromise and selectivity in applying them are impossible.

For American Catholics the authoritative source for guidance on moral obligations is the Holy See and the American hierarchy. When private groups state such obligations, they are presumed to be following competent authority. Statements that anticipate the decisions of such authority or are in conflict with its previous utterances must be challenged at once. The obligation to enter the war, which involves great suffering for our own people and truly incalculable consequences for the rest of the world, is of so grave a nature that it can be accepted only on the unqualified pronouncement of the highest authority. The silence of that authority on this matter can be explained in only two ways. Either this obligation does not exist or the teaching authority of the Church is in default. Which of these explanations recommends itself to the Catholic members of the FFF? It is hard to believe that they wish to be considered as receivers for the teaching authority of the bishops. Scattered individual voices raised on their behalf only emphasize the silence of those on whom the

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responsibility for proclaiming such an obligation rests. The attention they have received is due to their scarcity and to their acceptability to those whose warlike aims they promote.

There are grave practical objections to the course recommended to us by the FFF. It commits us as Catholics to invoking the aid of the military resources of America in defense of specifically Catholic interests. This would establish a dangerous precedent. It is something the American Catholics have never done and which they would repudiate again as they have often done in the past if it were charged against them by the anti-Catholic ranters who appear regularly in this country. Mrs. Calvin Coolidge is Vice-Chairman of the FFF. It is easy to picture the grim disapproval with which her husband would have received an appeal to use American arms to save the Mexican Church. In the Spanish Civil War the American Catholics confined their political activity to opposing American intervention against General Franco. It was never suggested that America aid him. Similarly we have never recommended an American crusade against the Soviet Union or American pressure on London on behalf of the sorely tried Catholics of Northern Ireland.

When the FFF asks us to abandon a policy so long adhered to in spite of the fact that that policy denied help to Catholics abroad who commanded our full sympathy, we may legitimately inquire into the ultimate reason for the departure they propose. Do they view Hitler primarily as a menace to Anglo-American world hegemony or as a menace to the Catholic Church? Can it be argued seriously that these two interests are identical or even parallel? If they are more concerned with their own affairs than with the interests of the Church, what can we expect when the nazi menace to them is removed? Shall we not then be like Germany's minor allies in the Russian war who cannot hope to have a decisive voice in the peace that would be established in Eastern Europe after a German triumph over the Soviet Union?

Interests of Church and State

The folly of identifying the interests of the Church with the triumph of a particular political régime has often been illustrated. It is true that occasionally they may be parallel, but in such cases the recognition of that fact must come from the Church. The American people have watched with amusement and contempt the efforts of the communists here to maintain solidarity with Moscow and the abject changes in policy to which it has condemned them. The basic reason for their difficulties is that their policy is determined abroad by forces they cannot control and must support. The interventionists are in the same plight for they must be ready to adjust themselves suddenly to policies determined in London. If the American Catholics acknowledge a moral obligation to support the Allied cause, they too will be bound to support whatever practical policies London may adopt. Then the attitude of the British Government will determine for us the morality of starving the French, the Belgians and the Dutch while feeding the Russians; of intimidating Japan into neutrality while inciting defenseless Ireland to belligerency; of praising Finland for resisting robbery and denouncing her for seeking restitution; of condemning the seizure of Indo-China by Japan while advocating the seizure of Dakar by America and of Syria and, probably, Iran by England.

Apart from the difficulties to which such a policy would expose the American Catholics, we must consider the difficulties it would create for the Church abroad. What would be the effect in the Latin world and in Germany of an official declaration that we are morally bound as Catholics to support the "democratic" powers? Grievous as are the trials of the German Church, the Holy See has neither commanded nor recommended revolt against Hitler. It has not even broken off diplomatic relations with Berlin. The FFF seem to have overlooked in the Fulda Pastoral, which they quote in support of their thesis, the passage in which the German bishops expressly reaffirm their loyalty to the Government. It is true that the German assault on Russia has not been blessed by the Pope, though only credulous people could have believed it would be, but on the other hand the Anglo-American alliance with the Soviet Union has not been commended. When we rebuke the Italians for their alliance with Berlin, they can retort with our alliance with Moscow, and the reply to the argument that it is possible to hate and fight communism while accepting active collaboration with Moscow is only too obvious. Both England and Italy are allied with governments that are active enemies of the Christian religion and that enslave about equal numbers of Christians. The Holy See is at least as interested in the welfare of these people as the FFF is, and it has been careful not to choose.

In discussing the issue of our moral obligation to support the Allies and to enter the war it is irrelevant to cite the attitude of Cardinal Hinsley and the English Catholics, whose outspoken condemnations of Hitler are well known. The English Catholics are perfectly justified in aiding their native land in her struggle for survival. They are not fighting Hitler because he is an enemy of Christianity. If that were their reason, they would have welcomed the war and would find it impossible to welcome the Russian alliance. Their attitude is an effect, not a cause, of the war. It is clear that it is based on very different reasons from those recommended to the American Catholics by the FFF. It is useful to recall when we are urged to declare war that not a single one of the national

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episcopates of the belligerent powers recommended such a policy to their people.

The war is basically a struggle for economic and political power. This is the motivating cause that inspires and dictates the policies of the belligerents. Religious and ideological differences are impulsive and secondary causes with the governments, though they may be primary with some sections of their peoples. Would the FFF have us fight all the active enemies of Christianity, or only those who menace Anglo-American political and economic interests? On their answer to this depends the sincerity of their moral appeal to American Catholics. The Catholics did not make the war and they will not make the peace. The disintegration of the West, of which this struggle is possibly the culminating episode, is caused by the rejection of Christian standards in public and private life. Its origins lie deep and have a long and complicated history. We are involved, as Catholics, in a disaster we cannot retrieve, and this must be borne in mind when practical policies are proposed to us. In the troubled waters on which we toss we cannot sail by stars that shine only in the firmament of the FFF whose Catholic members they promote to a leadership that does not belong to their office. Our helmsmen are the Holy See and the bishops of America. With them we must continue to pray for peace for America and the world, for the restriction of the area of the war and the mitigation of its calamities, and for the creation of such a leaven of good will as will make possible the healing and restoration that are the supreme need of our stricken world.

Men of the Axis Armies

German and Italian military leaders and the morale of those they command.

By **J. Paar-Cabrera**

THE AVERAGE SOLDIER of the Third Reich is not a blind believer in the nazi theory of the master race, of a German master race entitled to rule the world and to harvest the plums of such leadership—but he fervently hopes that such a theory may turn out to be true. For after two years of victories, the bitterness of the starvation years of his childhood and adolescence has gone out of his heart; but its place has been taken by a dread of the hatred of the vanquished, and by a grim conviction that all possibility of a merciful peace in the event of an Allied victory has been eliminated by the ruthless air bombings of England and by the steamrolling policy followed by the Nazi Party at the expense of the Czechs, the Poles, the Dutch, the Norwegians, the French, the Serbs and the Greeks.

Thus the grim password of the German soldier at the beginning of the Second World War, "If we don't get what we want now, we never will," has given place to the belief: "We must remain masters of continental Europe, or suffer as individuals to the end of our days, and die as a nation."

The German Government built the muscles of the young people of the nation with systematic exercise; it molded their minds with Godless and scientific super-propaganda; it turned them into crack soldiers by means of the most painstaking military methods of modern times. But it has to reckon with a failing for which there's no remedy: the lack of vitamins, proteins and balanced minerals in the diet of the children of the 1916-1918 blockade, and of the children and adolescents of the decade following the end of the first world war—who are the actual young men of Germany and make up the rank and file of its army. These young soldiers have the muscles and the bearing of athletes; but are their interior organs endowed with the stamina necessary to carry them, if need be, through periods of strenuous efforts unrelieved by adequate rests? With such an unsolved problem in mind, the German General Staff advised Hitler on the eve of his appointment as Chancellor of the Reich "to use prudence until another and sounder generation reaches military age."

As early as 1936 I heard a very high German functionary saying in a rare outspoken moment: "We may have to fight a war within the next ten years, but we don't like to think of it because a war can drag on, and if it does our young men may prove no good for it."

No physical failing was apparent in the German soldiers during the brief campaigns of Poland and the Balkans. Norway was no test, because most of the fighting there was done by Austrian mountain troops. The scrawny French infantrymen, carrying 60 pounds of equipment, were outmatched in every clash at close quarters by the taller, sturdier and speedier German assault troops, who carried nothing. But the soldiers of the horse-drawn artillery, hardest working branch of the Reich's army, reached Paris utterly spent,

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as it is proved by photos reproduced by many German illustrated magazines. In Crete and in Africa, the New Zealanders, Australians and Scots didn't find the Germans were hard to cope with as long as the odds were about even. In Russia, where General Distance and his cousin General Weariness play such an important part, the Germans have been rolled back time and again by the Russian counter-attacks.

An officer's life

In the German Army, the officers are served hand and foot by their orderlies and by the men of their units. They eat a special food and have special sleeping accommodations, even on the battlefield. Out of combat duty, their lot is therefore comparatively easy, and consequently they are less exposed to the weakening influence of fatigue. However the three-centuries-old control of the army by the "Junker" military caste has been broken by the Nazi Party. Such a change has not been beneficial, because the average thin-lipped and haughty Junker officer has inherited receptiveness to military learning, an inborn military instinct and a warlike judgment sharpened by a mental equipment of scientific military studies. His honesty, born of pride, is unflinching. His hatred of favoritism is so excessive that Junker subalterns detest serving in regiments commanded by their fathers or blood relations, who would invariably single them out for the most exacting undertakings and punish them rigidly at the least infraction.

Altogether the German Junker is not a sympathetic fellow and would be hated by soldiers of other nationalities; but he has a lot of personal prestige and military skill, and therefore he's eagerly obeyed, if not loved, by the German soldiers, who have been raised and trained since childhood in the principle of respect for authority. On the other hand the nazi-politician officers taken from civilian life, from the Brown Shirts or from the Schutz Staffel, who actually are in all the branches of the Reich's land armies and their staffs, in many cases owe their grade to party affiliation and don't have the mental equipment, learning and qualities of leadership required by their jobs.

Nazi party influence, supreme in the Luftwaffe, doesn't affect its efficiency. Aviation, however, is still in the evolutionary stage in spite of its already great destructive power. It has not as yet developed air strategies and tactics to speak of. The aviator is thus like a medieval man at arms. He must have heroic courage, a healthy body, a full control of his conveyance—which is an airplane and not a war-horse—and he must be skilled with his weapons. But he doesn't need the mental equipment and training of a land officer, particularly of a general staff officer.

As far as the *Generalität* is concerned, nazi influence has not affected the German army of the Third Reich any more than the personal likes and dislikes of the late Kaiser affected the Imperial army during the First World War. For, as under the Kaiser, many Hitlerian generals of the regular army have been raised in authority for their fawning attitude, while others, perhaps more worthy but of a more outspoken turn of mind, have been put in the background as far as the supreme need of winning the actual war made it possible.

The actual top-ranking military leaders of Germany are Generals Keitel and Braunschig. Keitel is a good organizer and Hitler's trusted man. Braunschig still remains an unknown quantity for the non-nazi world. The rapid conquest of Poland is considered his greatest achievement. But there is a widespread belief in German military circles that the plans for the conquest of Poland were drawn by General von Fritsch, who died during that campaign as a plain regimental leader, and under mysterious circumstances.

The hero of the German soldiers in the campaign of Poland was General von Reichenau, who swam across two rivers under a hail of bullets at the head of assault troops to establish bridgeheads on the opposite shore, and thereafter led the most devastating thrusts of the German panzer units.

Colonel General von Braunschig is from eastern Prussia. His first marriage made him master of enormous landed estates, and he is therefore a very wealthy man. His second wife, considerably younger than he, is the comely daughter of a Silesian judge. Severe and tactful, Braunschig has a reputation as artillery expert.

Reichenau is, on the contrary, an old style blustery and dynamic officer, a sort of Seydlitz or Blucher of mechanized warfare. Coarse of feature, with a monocle screwed in his right eye, a swagger and a liking for fighting in the front lines beside privates, he shared with General List the main rôle in the French disaster—and his popularity, accordingly, grew by such leaps and bounds that, from that time on, the Nazi Party used him as an adviser but kept him out of the limelight. It is said, however, that the council of generals, of which one hears now and then, agrees with Hitler that Reichenau is too good to be purged, but too personally ambitious to be allowed entirely to have his way.

General List, a Bavarian, has not the personal magnetism of Reichenau but is perhaps even a better strategist than he. Quiet and studious, he is not easily dominated by party lines. His masterpiece was the campaign by interior lines which he directed in Norway. In the battle of the Balkans, which he directed also, he displayed his usual brilliance, but his lot was rendered easier by the faulty original line-up of the Allies, and by the fact that

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the latter neglected to place an adequate number of troops on the isthmus of Corinth, life-line of the Greek retreat, in the last stage of the campaign.

Like Reichenau, List was put in the background at the beginning of the Russian campaign. But he was recalled to take charge of the German right wing, facing the Russian Armies of Budenny, when Generals Hanson and Antonescu met setbacks.

General Falkenhorst, who distinguished himself in Norway and in the battles that took place in Holland, Belgium and France, was a friend of that Cavalry General Kress von Kressenstein who, as the story ran, shot and seriously wounded Hitler toward the end of 1938, in the tempestuous secret meeting which preceded the retirement of General Blomberg. But Hitler made a public speech the following week, and nobody any longer heard of General Kress. Now General Falkenhorst is military governor of a conquered province.

General Falkenhausen, a Saxon, is a former Imperial general, and therefore well along in years. But he is still alert in mind and body and retained in active duty in an administrative capacity—to be recalled, in spite of his non-nazi views, if his return to active duty proves necessary. General Falkenhausen, tall, thin, slightly stooped and wearing a pince-nez, looks more like a typical German bank manager than like a German officer. But, in China, with ill-armed and hastily drilled Chinese troops, he held a million Japanese soldiers to a standstill until the repeated requests of the Japanese Government induced Hitler to force him to return to Germany.

General Paul von Kleist, comparatively young, is considered an expert in both motorized and mountain warfare, and perhaps the best of the new crop of German generals.

General Milch, organizer and coordinator of the Luftwaffe, and an extremely efficient and skilled man in his own right, is not an Aryan. Next to him in rank in the Luftwaffe are Generals Darre and Sperle. These two are rather rough-looking. Little is known about their true past record. As leading minds of the bombings and destructions of British towns, they have accumulated an unenviable burden of hatreds.

The Italians

A survey of the events that took place in Italy, second partner of the Axis, from the beginning of the Second World War to the virtual taking over of the direction of the Italian armed forces by Germany, presents an accumulation of so many elements making for interior discord that one is bound to wonder how a shrewd man like Mussolini could have acted as he did with the inevitable intervention of fascist Italy in the war in the offing. First of all, the urban middle class and the class of big and small landowners of Sicily, which since 1870 have supplied the greatest number of commissioned and non-commissioned officers to the armies of Italy next to the Province of Piedmont, were disaffected by the enforced transfer of hundreds of thousands of Northern Italians to Sicily and by the partition of Sicilian landed property without adequate remuneration to owners. Then the master minds of the Fascist Party began a campaign for the elimination of the entire Italian middle class, which Mussolini topped with a personal invitation to the Italian aristocracy to surrender their titles.

In Italy all education above the primary is costly. Even army officers who rose from the regular army ranks are seldom sons of peasants and manual workers. Consequently, on the eve of Italy's entrance into the war, the majority of all its commissioned and non-commissioned officers nursed a grudge against the Nazi Party and Mussolini. Mussolini saw the writing on the wall. He proposed to Hitler "a help, short of war, which would enable Italy to fulfil its rôle of ally, by immobilizing large Allied naval and land forces in the Mediterranean basin by means of its pro-German attitude."

Hitler didn't insist, because his experts feared the unavoidable taking over and feeding of forty-two million Italians in the event of an early Italian reverse, when Germany hadn't yet seized the livestock and dairy products of Norway, Denmark and the Low Countries. But toward the end of the battle of France, the Fascist Supreme Council couldn't avoid the issue any longer.

The catastrophic Italian blunders—the sending of a sea-sick expedition by motor boat to Menton, where they were promptly overwhelmed by the Senegalese garrison — the shipment of tropical equipment to the soldiers freezing on the snow-capped mountains of northern Greece, and the sending of thick woolens to the over-heated North African Army of Marshal Graziani — can be attributed to various causes besides inefficiency. The declaration of Italian accredited agents, however, long before the German-Russian clash, that "the immense resources of Russia were bound to engulf the German military might," points to a determined policy.

Does this policy belong to a preceding pact between the leaders of the Fascist Party and those of the Nazi Party, drawn for the sake of remaining in the saddle in their homeland on a fifty-fifty basis with Germany—like the tentative agreement discussed by some leaders of the Spanish Phalanx with those of the Third Reich as far as Spain is concerned? If such is the case, the Italian exaltation of Russia would match the recent German invitation to the world to see in the nazis its defenders from the great danger represented by Bolshevism; it couldn't be attributed to British influence, for the hatred of the leaders of fascism

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for the Anglo-Saxon world is only too genuine, but it might be attributed to some secret agreement with Russia. At any rate, German influence in Italy has already brought the end of the fascist campaign for the suppression of the middle class.

The fighting spirit of the fascist army, however, was artificial from the very beginning and is now a thing of the past. Italian troops, sandwiched between German units and commanded by officers indebted to the Germans for some favor or promotion, will still serve the nazis against the English, and as garrisons in the conquered countries—but not in Russian territory. Because it must not be forgotten that in 1920 Italy nearly went communist, and the lure of communism is still strong among ill-fed and long-misinformed peoples who have known humiliation and defeat. But, if the Germans go, fascism will also disappear from the face of Italy.

The Italian Officers' Corps will remain, with its military and technical knowledge—but it will inevitably undergo reductions in personnel, which will affect chiefly the officers coming from the Black Shirt militia. These, together with the younger element of regular army officers raised in the fascist doctrine, will rally around any new standard bearers of fanned and unappeased ambitions. But Italy is an old, tired and embittered nation. It may accept a new set of rulers out of weariness, but not a new policy of foreign adventure.

A return to the parliamentarian form of government in the event of a fascist collapse would be welcomed by the middle-aged regular army officers trained in the military schools or in the regiments of the kingdom before the advent of fascism; and these officers have still some hold on the Italian people because they are identified with the final success of the First World War and with the conquest of Ethiopia, when political considerations had not yet interfered with the fair, if not excellent, Italian military system.

A more compact attitude will be presented, to all appearances, by the German officers' corps in the event of a collapse of the nazi régime. They will not turn to the democratic principles advocated by the Republic of Weimar, because they were anti-militaristic, and because the memory of the Republic of Weimar is too closely identified with that of the German famine succeeding the First World War.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

IN REFERRING last week to the projected meeting of the representatives of many scientific and theological groups at Columbia University, I also mentioned the flood of declarations, both from individuals and organizations, issuing from all parts of the country and all striving to interest the public in diverse ideas connected with problems of war and peace. A very large number of these utterances have to do with different, sometimes violently conflicting, forces of propaganda concerning the immediate behavior of our people towards the war itself. Various shades of isolationist or of interventionist policies are reflected; but also there is a considerable and growing number of movements which deal with long-range or future ideas or plans or speculations concerning the world after the war.

Space in this restricted department of the paper would not suffice to list even a small portion of these multitudinous projects, but in general it may, I think, be said that they belong to what might be termed the intellectual or moral or spiritual forces of intervention and do not come from the isolationists. That is to say, in general, that they represent the thoughts or the emotions of those who believe that this nation should, or indeed in some instances must, through the sheer necessity of things, play a large, even the leading part, in the reorganization of the world when the war is over. Even the strict isolationists may be said to share this conviction that our own country must take a great share in reconstruction, even if only by the force of its moral example by preserving, as the isolationists believe it can, its own institutions unimpaired, and its own strength in every way—economic, political, even military, it seems to be presumed—in the event of a Hitler victory. The theory seems to be that the rest of the world will sooner or later model its national and social systems after our own triumphant model, and when that is done peace and prosperity will be universal, and likewise perpetual.

However, most of the schemes which contain any details, or even the rough general lines of a working policy for the future, emanate more from the interventionist type of mind than from the strict isolationst camp; that is, they come from those who really believe that the United States should not and indeed in the nature of the case cannot stand aloof from the world revolution, but must, at least in ways short of actual physical warfare, participate in the present struggle and take its full share in dealing, in common with other nations, with the problems of world reconstruction after the physical struggle is over. The spirit of Woodrow Wilson and his abortive League of Nations appears to preside over a large number of these plans, while others, like Clarence Streit's "Union Now," revolve around various notions of federalization with the English-speaking nations as the center of world or regional groupings of nations and natural resources. A very interesting variant of this latter type of project is offered by Mr. Russell W. Davenport in his introductory article in the August issue of *Fortune,* which in its entirety is devoted "to the United States at war." As Mr. Davenport explains, *Fortune* does not mean "that the US has declared war or that it need declare war in the immediate future," but only that, willy-nilly, "we are in the war," because its consequences cannot be evaded. So Mr. Davenport tentatively suggests the formation of an international party to work for the realization of an "Area of Freedom," embracing all nations willing to sacrifice the principle of unlimited

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sovereignty and subscribe to a political and economic system of interdependent liberty and democracy based upon the doctrines of Christianity.

Perhaps the forthcoming meeting at Columbia may deal with this and similar plans. I remember, when I first went to Vatican City, before there was a Vatican City (in the state sense of the word), in 1922, how forcibly I was impressed by the fact that so many ecclesiastical authorities were discussing the possibility of a revival of the Vatican Council, held then to be imminent, in which, so it was believed, the Church would pronounce upon the whole problem of national sovereignty and condemn it as a heresy. Let us pray that soon our Church, officially and authoritatively, may in its inspired wisdom be moved to deal with this most fundamental of all world problems. Perhaps the Columbia University meeting may be one of the signs of the times that may lead to action by the Church itself.

Communications

SO THE NEGROES WANT WORK?

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I have followed with keen interest the articles of Mr. George Streator which have appeared from time to time in THE COMMONWEAL. As a young Negro Catholic, it is encouraging for me to see appear in our Catholic press a candid discussion of day to day problems of the Negro by a man who is, I believe, primarily interested in human welfare and who recognizes that "the lights of democracy cannot be lit unless they are lighted for all."

It seems a little unfortunate that one must depend so largely on such periodicals as THE COMMONWEAL and such articles as written by Mr. Streator to gain an interpretation of our Catholic doctrine in terms of social reality. How much more effective, how much nearer to the true function of our religion if *Rerum Novarum* and the various Papal Encyclicals could be discussed from our pulpits during Sunday Mass. If, as Mr. Streator believes, "race hatred must be fought by organizations basically spiritual," what more effective instrument have we than the Catholic Church?

Mr. Streator points up certain facts in his article "So the Negroes Want Work!" (August 22) that seem to objectify the responsibility of Catholic leadership in these days when we speak so glibly about "the four freedoms." The Church has had inherent in its teachings for centuries belief in the rights of human personality. It has taught, sometimes abstractly though, that man "is not an isolated individual. He is a member of a community and he has in consequence duties of commutative justice and duties of social justice, and duties of charity which emerge from this relationship." The use that the Church makes of these teachings, which are tied so indissolubly into the fabric of social reality, determines to a large degree the place of all religion in the world in which we must live tomorrow.

I hope that we may have many more articles by George Streator. But I hope, too, that these contributions are only a beginning. Not until a program of social action is formulated designed to eradicate the "weak spots in America's armor"—spiritual and economic—can there be any hope of turning on the lights of democracy. Catholic leadership, both lay and otherwise, has a great responsibility in providing the initiative for such a program. With the *imprimatur* of that leadership, constructive change can be effected in the thinking and action of every priest and layman in the Catholic communion.

JAMES R. DUMPSON.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I have read George Streator's article, "So the Negroes Want Work," and I feel that the Editors of the paper have done a great service in publishing it, for it can hardly be read without emotion. The question arises regarding the attitude of the Catholic laity, and permit me to say with great frankness, I find apathy instead of enthusiasm. We are of course familiar with the admirable work of Father La Farge and the Baroness de Hueck in Harlem, but "one swallow does not make a summer," and the laity must work and realize the importance of interracial justice. It is hard to understand their indifference when you realize how often the Holy Father has spoken on the subject. And President Roosevelt's statement is clear and decisive: "This discrimination is a crushing blow against national morale, and the level of American civilization. It is wrong."

ALICE E. WARREN.

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editors: Many thanks for this week's fine, *uncompromising* article by George Streator.

What a relief he is from the hairsplitters and reverend doctors of evasion (like the Jesuit last June, who questioned the consciences of Catholic CO's) who too often clutter up and reduce the tone of your pages to the traditional impotent level of Catholic publications.

Thanks again.

J. F. POWERS.

Bluefield, West Va.

TO the Editors: The State of West Virginia CIO convention convened here in June. There were about 300 Negro delegates. Negroes hold office and took important parts in the convention. The banquet was held in the West Virginia Hotel, and Negroes and whites ate together, sitting at same tables. No Jim Crow at all. It was the most orderly convention ever held in Bluefield. I did not see a single Negro drunk, although there were several white men who indulged too freely. But there was no noticeable disorder.

DR. CLAUDE KINGSLOW.

PEACE

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: To prepare for peace in time of war, is to many publicists and editors, a note of defeatism. To my mind, it is a note of Christian defeatism to fail to prepare for peace at all times. Of this defeatism, I am most happy to note, THE COMMONWEAL is free.

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If "defeatist" is cried out against those who fear defeat in war because of tremendous obstacles to be overcome, why should not those Christians be denounced as defeatist who despair of peace by reason of undisputable obstacles in its way? A negotiated peace, we are being told by some of them, must be ruled out—not only for the present but for all time. A negotiated peace today may mean a triumph of fear over principle, but such a peace on some tomorrow, may it not mean a triumph of reason over passions engendered by lust for power and revenge?

And is not such a negotiated peace the only democratic peace, a peace to whose terms all consent, whereas a peace, dictated by democratic (?) victors, is none the less a dictator's peace?

For such a peace, I believe, America should work—and work now. Peace preparation is no more an overnight job than war preparation. It can no more wait on the day peace is declared, than war preparation can wait the day war is declared. This, to my mind, is not the least lesson to be learned from our experience in the first World War, when, if I remember aright, we were told to shelve all peace thoughts till war was won. The war was won, but there were no peace preparations to support Woodrow Wilson's peace program.

FRANK D. SLOCUM.

ERIC GILL

Seattle, Wash.

TO the Editors: Michael Williams's second "Views and Reviews" on Eric Gill strangely coincides in my reading with the summer issue of "Christendom," sent to me by my fellow exile, Ernst Wilhelm Meyer, who nobly resigned from his position at the nazi embassy in Washington in 1937. I wish somebody could digest this fine issue for your readers, as it contains a great deal of thought-food on the issue of the future peace. I said "strangely coincides" in my first sentence, because I find that Eric Gill was by no means a lone wolf in England. The Malvern Conference (January, 1941) showed that a Christian Revolution is in the air in England, see Lord Acland, Kenneth Sugram, John Middleton Murry, T. S. Eliot, Dorothy Sayers, the Bishop of Chichester, and, last but not least, the Archbishop of York himself.

If we take "Malvern" and add to it the Catholic "Sword of the Spirit" movement, we see that the one country which seems to undergo a true spiritual rebirth is the one which is so easily and scathingly attacked as a plutocracy, the fortress of Toryism and what not.

Helen Iswolsky a short while ago praised the rebirth of France and gave due emphasis to the great Dominican leader of the Breton seamen, Father Joseph Lebret. We hear that Holland also is in a state of true spiritual fermentation. Behind the barbed wires of Germany, Austria and Poland we hear a faint rumble which indicates the rise of a new and deeper Christian life. So the whole of Europe does not appear to be what some noisy propagandists want us to believe: just a pack of bloodthirsty, hypocritical imperialists.

It is, however, most comforting to see that the heroic and much maligned English are more sincerely engaged in an examination of their consciences than the others. Eric Gill was thus a forerunner and a Catholic exponent of this renewal. Maybe those bad Europeans can after all teach others a lesson, while they fight off the incarnation of materialism and ruthless imperialism or silently suffer under its diabolical tyranny. I wish Messrs. Wheeler, Lindbergh, Nye and their Catholic partisans would ask themselves once in a while if a holier-than-thou attitude toward these problems is really up to date and progressive. Apart from the fact that some people can't deal with the complex England without getting vindictive and hot—isn't there in isolationism quite a bit of egotism and smugness?

REV. H. A. REINHOLD.

EIGHT POINTS

Avon Lodge, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In his message to Congress relative to the Eight Points, President Roosevelt remarked that freedom of religion was an integral part of the declaration. This whole matter brings to mind that the problem of human freedom and religion is neither new nor settled. Philosophers in the same camp of battle for human freedom may differ on the question of religion. Today we see atheists and religionists fighting together against pagan and idolatrous fascism. The problem is for the future course of intellectual development; but one thing we may be sure of, which is that only in a state of freedom can it be truly resolved. In substantiation of this I quote from one of the greatest Catholic philosophers, Roger Bacon:

> And when Christians confer with pagans, like the Prusceni and the other adjoining nations, they yield easily and see that they are held by errors. The proof of this is that they wished most willingly to be made Christians if the Church were willing to permit them to retain their freedom and to enjoy their goods in peace. But the Christian princes who labor for their conversion, and most of all the brothers of the Teutonic house, wish to reduce them to servitude, as is known to the Dominicans and Franciscans and other good men throughout Germany and Poland. And therefore, they offer opposition; whence, they stand against oppression, not against the arguments of a better religion.

MARTIN WOLFSON.

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

New Hope, Penna.

TO the Editors: At first I was surprised that John Cort had written a letter in praise of Cronin's new book, "The Keys of the Kingdom." John is a Harvard graduate, intelligent, possessed of good taste, whereas the book is one vast stinkerola, practically from start to finish. Then I remembered that John, like most labor organizers, is particularly aware of the value of propaganda. In its fashion the book may be fairly good propaganda for Catholicism, at least among the lower intelligences.

In such an attitude lies the fallacy which has cursed Catholic criticism of the arts and emasculated Catholic writing. It is only recently that even a few Catholic publications have departed from the wishfully thought attitude that a book that was morally bad was badly written and a book that was morally good was well-written.

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Art *per se* is amoral. It may concern itself with either moral or immoral subjects, frequently both. I don't intend to go into detail here since I cannot carry Jacques Maritain's typewriter as either an artist or critic, and he has dealt fully and completely with the subject in his "Art and Scholasticism." But, before a thing can be art, it must possess a certain form. Form is the first test of art. Subject then determines whether that particular work of art is great or small; subject and the degree of form. Cronin's book fails miserably and utterly by the first test of form. As Jerome Weidman pointed out in *PM*, the book is a sort of literary regurgitation of all the hack writers Dr. Cronin read and failed quite to digest.

I'm not interested in whether the book is good propaganda or not. Personally, I thought it was even bad propaganda. What I am interested in is good writing and the possible evolution here of a few competent novelists who also happen to be Catholics. When THE COMMONWEAL even bothers to give space in its pages for discussion of a book as badly done as "The Keys of the Kingdom," it is failing in its mission as the only Catholic magazine of national importance to bring competent and objective help and criticism to the sad cause of Catholic art in this country.

Unless we continue to avoid sentimentality in our criticism, we shall go along fostering the honey-and-holy-water school of Catholic novelists for the secular reviewers to laugh at or ignore. It can't be said longer that secular reviewers are unsympathetic to good writing about things Catholic. The very favorable reviews that books by Greene, Bernanos and Kate O'Brien have received in the past year or two gives the lie to that claim. These are Europeans and the product of a profounder and more cultured Catholicism than that of America. But we will not help Catholic art here by quibbling over such books as this last thing of Cronin's. A badly written book is a badly written book, no matter if it convert millions.

HARRY SYLVESTER.

The Screen

Go to the Movies and See the World

WHEN cinema swings into swashbuckling adventure and romance, it should find itself right in its element and should hit the sky with resounding, robust daring. This week the movies go on land and sea, into the air and under the water to find backgrounds for their exciting outdoor melodrama. But when the results are tepid, as most of them are, cinema should be spanked soundly, for it has no excuse for turning out lukewarm films in a field in which it can easily excel.

I am afraid *"This Woman Is Mine"* will have to be spanked—for it has the right ingredients, but it wastes them. A whole shipload of daring sailors and adventurers are bound on a fur trading expedition in 1810 from New York to Oregon by way of the Horn. In particular there are a hard, stern captain whose other god is Discipline and whose word is law—until the Oregon fort is built; a handsome, dashing French-Canadian rascal with a heavy French accent and a great love of life, the leader of the Voyageurs, those roisterous boys who paddle a mean canoe and live for adventure; two Scottish experts in fur trading who know more about the ways of Indians than does the bossy captain; a couple of hard-boiled mates and a crew of first class toughs; and by way of contrast, a shy, gentlemanly but courageous clerk sent along by John Jacob Astor to look after his interests; and last, but by no means least, a stowaway—a young singer who thinks she's on her way to Paris but soon discovers that the fun-loving French-Canadian with the charming accent and manner means no good by her, and that her being the lone woman on the ship means no good for the expedition. So, there's the set-up that should spell high excitement in any man's language. But Seton I. Miller and Frederick Jackson have written a sluggishly heavy script; and Frank Lloyd, who produced and directed and is an expert in this field, did not put his best imagination to work this time. The long voyage seems endlessly slow, without action and high spots to pep it up. The actors did not help too much, but they can hardly be blamed for being discouraged with an infantile story and weakly motivated rôles. Walter Brennan, as the captain, leers severely and ogles the girl foolishly. Franchot Tone is properly bespectacled as the clerk and properly submissive and courageous as the occasion requires. John Carroll is as over carefree, enthusiastic and Frenchy as is necessary for such a boyish-rogue rôle. I'm sorry that I didn't see Carol Bruce on the stage, for she is said to have quite a flair in musical comedy. Her charm unfortunately disappears before the camera—at least it does in her first film. "This Woman Is Mine" can be recommended for its handsome seascapes and eloquent Oregon scenery with mountains, clouds and trees. Dull adventure films cannot talk nature out of its grandeur.

Of course there are times when even natural scenery can be overgilded and appear cloying. The technicolor is so bright and overdone in *"Aloma of the South Seas"* that it is an affront to the real beauties that Mother Nature had in mind. There is one point in favor of these South Sea pictures in which the girls run around in sarongs and the boys in breechclouts: if your own figure is not quite so svelte as it was a couple of years ago, you're likely to sit up straighter, suck in your tummy and make a few resolutions about exercising as you watch Dorothy Lamour's and Jon Hall's beautiful, bronzed bodies run through the ferns and dive deep into the clear waters of green shaded pools. The screenplay itself is likely to give you pause. It has some of the silliest dialogue ever put into a back-to-nature film. (In one scene Dottie's native aunt says to her, "Thou art the thorn in my side, the pain in my neck.") You're never quite sure if the film is to be taken seriously and it's just plain bad, or if Director Alfred Santell was making a burlesque of South Sea films to end all South Sea films. The villainies of Philip Reed, Prince Jon Hall's cousin who wants to get control of the island and tribe, and the tempestuous volcanic eruption and earthquake in the end are too phony to warrant consideration. This film couldn't have been made just to show a lot of unusually good vaccination marks. Harvard boys, however, will have a real gripe in connection with "Aloma." When freshly graduated Prince Jon returns

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from Cambridge to his native island, one of the first things he does is teach Dottie the art of petting. Surely the Harvard technique is not so naïve.

But if you want to see some first rate technicolor and outstanding shots of flying, *"Dive Bomber"* is your picture. There's a real thrill in store for you as yellow planes in formation zoom through fleecy white clouds and a luscious blue sky, or in those excellent scenes of planes landing on the colorful airplane carriers or in the stunning shots of flying at the US Naval Air Station at San Diego. The heart of man and boy will leap up as he beholds these beauties in the sky. But having leapt up, the heart can stand only so much beauty, and when the film goes into its second hour, fatigue sets in. There is plot of course, but even it grows wearisome as its themes are repeated for the second and third time. "Dive Bomber" is devoted mainly to flight surgeons whose job it is to keep our pilots in the air. At times the film becomes a lecture on the subject with the details on research about the fliers' blackout and high altitude sickness and other problems involved in aviation which now demands that man go higher and higher. "Dive Bomber" is not without its propaganda, which stresses that all this preparation is for the coming big show which will be fought in the air; and the man on top will win, so the sky's the limit. Then there's Errol Flynn, handsome and immaculate as a Greek statue, as the doctor who learns the hard way all the details of flying so he can conquer the ill effects of the higher altitude on man. And there's Fred MacMurray, sour-pussed and irritable, who belittles Errol but teaches him the intricacies of flying, lets himself be used as a human guinea pig, cooperates in the invention of a flying suit and goes to his death in the perfecting of the suit. And there's Ralph Bellamy, bitter over being grounded through afflictions caused during his experiments, but sincerely interested in the research. Most of the time these grown men act like little boys, and their horseplay and childishness gets a bit tiresome, but they come to an understanding in time to do some constructive work. After all, the US Navy assisted in the making of this picture, and the Navy wouldn't want movie audiences to think its men were a bunch of emotional morons. There's a girl, too, newcomer Alexis Smith, but the boys are too busy with aviation medicine so she goes over to the Marines. If Michael Curtiz, who directed this film so well, could have convinced Warner Brothers not to put all their airplane shots in one basket, "Dive Bomber" could easily have been the best flying picture to date. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

More Belloc

Cautionary Verses. Hilaire Belloc. Illustrations by B. T. B and Nicolas Bentley. Knopf. $3.00.

THIS beautiful, illustrated album edition of Belloc's nursery rhymes and nonsense verse is the first American publishing of the work. Contained are all the old favorites and a good many new verses about obnoxious brats of all ages, about animals of Belloc's peculiar preference and other assorted things, animate and otherwise. Some of it is pleasantly chiding, some pleasantly gory, all pleasantly stimulating. Whether Belloc is kidding a child or a politician, he is always gentle enough to be loved for it, offensive enough to be convincing.

Belloc is a subtle fellow. He has accomplished a mean that could only be reached by a master versifier, that middle road that can be traveled by both children and intelligent adults. Both can appreciate the sanguinary burlesque of the fate of bad children. No namby-pamby verse for them. Take Jim, for instance. Jim ran away from his nurse.

Bang!
With open Jaws, a Lion sprang
And hungrily began to eat
The Boy: beginning at the feet.
Now just imagine how it feels
When first your toes and then your heels,
And then by gradual degrees,
Your shins and ankles, calves and knees,
Are slowly eaten, bit by bit.
(Here a drawing of Jim, half devoured, looking wild-eyed at the lion who is about to resume its meal.)
No wonder Jim detested it!

There are seven books in the volume. The one on the Lords of the realm, while a bit trite in content, can still be enjoyed immensely. In others the middle class comes in for a gentle lashing, along with the literati, the radicals and the reviewers of this particular book.

Particularly sly is the Moral Alphabet. There is nothing precious about it; there are a great many not unintentionally nasty comments on Belloc's pet peeves.

"O" stands for Oxford. Hail! salubrious seat
Of learning! Academical retreat!
Home of my Middle Age! Malarial Spot
Which People call Medeeval (though it's not).
The marshes in the neighbourhood can vie
With Cambridge, but the town itself is dry,
And serves to make a kind of Fold or Pen
Wherein to herd a lot of Learned Men.

Were I to write but half of what they know,
It would exhaust the space reserved for "O";
And, as my book must not be over big
I turn at once to "P," which stands for Pig.

MORAL
Be taught by this to talk with moderation
Of places where, with decent application,
One gets a good, sound, middle-class education.

I should like to repeat a great deal more of the verse. But the publishers would frown on this, so I can only advise you to get the book. I promise that every member of the family will want to read it. It is one of those books which make one want to buttonhole everyone else and repeat this or that verse to him. I think I can offer no better praise than that. WILLIAM M. CALLAHAN.

BIOGRAPHY

No Life for a Lady. Agnes Morley Cleaveland. Houghton Mifflin. $3.00.

THE MOVIES have glamorized the West to such an extent that the reading of Mrs. Cleaveland's interesting story comes as a welcome corrective. It begins with the author's memories of her father and his work as chief construction engineer of the Santa Fé Railroad and continues with the recital of exciting experiences encountered

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by those who really pioneered in the old West. Although Mrs. Cleaveland's prose conjures up pictures of life in the great open spaces, a city dweller such as this reviewer cannot escape the feeling that Western life in those early days must have been a rather drab and routine affair. But it does indicate the possibility of we moderns being able to live a comfortable life without the use of many gadgets that have become a fetish today. The present national emergency may help us to regain our balance in such matters. Quotations are convenient padding, but this one has some justification in view of the romantic impression many of us entertain concerning the American Indian: "If anyone imagines that the early settlers, by maintaining a proper attitude, could have lived in amity with the Indians, let him consider how little amity existed between the various Indian tribes themselves. From time immemorial, American Indians had lived by raiding, whether of the natural bounty of the land or the garnered resources of their neighbors. The net result at the end of thousands of years was that this continent, possessed perhaps of the greatest natural resources in the world, bore a population of less than a hundredth part of what exists upon it today, and this hundredth part lived precariously and in a state of perpetual terror. Ruthless and predatory Anglo-Saxons did not burst into a redman's Garden of Eden and wrest it from him. When all sentimentality about the fate of the American Indian has been cleared away, the bald fact stands out that today's American Indian enjoys this blessing at least; he need no longer fear his redskin brother's savage cruelties." Shades of Oliver LaFarge!

Our present concern with the affairs of every nation under the sun is creditable, but an occasional dip in books like this one will help to strike a balance; and, after all, it is well to have a good background knowledge of this country's growth. Mrs. Cleaveland has done a good job in her own particular corner of this great nation.

MAURICE LAVANOUX.

Autobiography. Eric Gill. Devin-Adair. $3.50.

A LEADER among the pitifully small group of Catholic artists, Gill has aroused as much opposition as he had found loyalties. His detractors are usually people of gross taste who pray as well, or better, in front of a "photographic" daub as they would before a masterpiece, clerics who gladly cram their churches with the gaudiest plaster saints that mass production markets; while on the other hand those who unconditionally worship Gill and his work are faithfuls of enlightened taste, instrumental in building and decorating churches in a modern style that slowly pushes aside the monstrosities of a phony gothic. Thus to give Gill's work only restricted praise is a somewhat perilous affair, a partial strengthening of dubious allies against their esthetic betters.

Under the egis of Saint Paul was this book of confessions written; having completed it, its author, with finely clocked timing, laid himself to sleep robed in the Dominican habit of a tertiary. Clearly soaked in an atmosphere of Grace, the telling of his life brings to literature the precise horse sense of a craftsman accustomed to carve hard materials, wood and stone, whose grain and density make short work of attempted nonsense. The plastic thought of Gill the carver that ponders the angle of the chisel and weighs the stroke of the mallet informs with both caution and confidence the articulate thoughts of Gill the writer. His style, clothed in worker-like simplicity, can also pack the wallop of a worker's fist. His thinking apparatus is so earthy that it seems conditioned by touch and smell rather than logic, so salty that the pen moves impulsed by the loins as well as the brain. Gill the stonecutter digs into things of thought as a mole into the black soil, carving patient tunnels that open at the end on true blue vistas.

Coming from the mind of a man accustomed to think and feel in images, this book can be summed up in a picture more easily than in an abstract train of thought. Reading it conjures a penny sheet with gaudy coloring, a Currier and Ives in robust style: wearing the leather apron proper to stonecarvers and the folded paper cap that printers sport, a bearded patriarch holds the chisel of the sculptor and the burils of the wood-engraver; surrounded by cases of sans-serif, he stands silhouetted against the bulk of a screw-press that assistants slowly feed with handmade sheets; one sees through the door the women baking bread, tending cattle, giving the breast to their brood among the arches of a crumbling monastery. It is a composite image that superimposes reminiscences of the patron saints of many trades, Saint Luke the icon maker, Saint Eloy the smith, Crispin and Crispinian in leather aprons working at their bench, Saint Isidore who watches over the farm chores, and a kind of Tobias who does care for the dead by lettering their virtues on tombstones.

From the man that the book evokes, artisan rather than artist, shorn of theories, hot-blooded and hirsute, an unknowing reader would expect works as good, as imperfect, as humorous and as sanguine as himself. Indeed it is hard to reconcile Gill the man, as seen through the eyes of Gill the writer, with the mannered and somewhat bloodless productions of Gill the artist; the author somewhat clarifies the paradox by detailing the influences that concurred in shaping his style.

At the start of his career he specialized exclusively in carved lettering on monuments and tombstones. A carved letter is most peculiar among sculptured beings because, in spite of beveled uprights and incised serifs, it has no real volume or existence in space, its members are rigidly flush with the frontal plane of the slab. Thus Gill became familiar with this paradox: a sculpture in calligraphic terms that depend neither on volume nor on space. Nature offers no subject matter as unsubstantial as man-created letters. Even a blade of grass pressed between blotters suffers violence as it is thus ushered into two dimensions; though paper thin, the helicoidal torsion of its live body already postulates space and volume.

Gill well realized the limitations of his calling. He dared carve garlands of leaves and flowers in the margins of his text; but when his design included embellishments in the round, such as cheeky cherub's heads, the young letterer would wisely give the job to a sculptor, as it seemed to him then outside the range of his craft. He soon hardened his heart to such adolescent scruples, came eventually to carve not only heads but bodies, whole clusters of personages in action. In spite of the applause this more ambitious work received, one may question at least its influence on many a younger artist. The flatness that letters possess by nature, that leaves and flowers may acquire (still retaining a measure of their former entity), does mortal violence to man; in his bas-reliefs the volume gives way to the slice, the human body with its elbows and knees painfully profiled appears crushed into the surface of the stone slab.

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For sure Gill, the skilled letterer, often weaves his silhouettes into calligraphic purity, spins a line as precisely stream-lined as the profiles cut by a tooling-machine; one may however question the propriety of transmuting man, and especially the Man-God, into a pattern. Gill worked, perhaps unknowingly, closer to the "modern" movement of the Parisian abstractionists than he would have cared to admit, but while Braque and Picasso humbly worked their magic on a guitar, a pipe or a package of tobacco, Gill collected and pressed into his strange herbary the most sacred objects that his faith grasped.

Gill submits candid and lucid explanations for his other activities: how he came to carve a nude woman as a kind of sexual outlet, how he adopted an "unnatural" style because it was the only one he knew. Such humbleness relying more on artisan's sweat than on higher logic contrasts with the assurance of some of his followers, who stoop from metaphysical truths to the physical problems of art, who show a tendency to solve esthetic dilemmas by wielding the "Summa" as if it was a tomahawk.

All his life Gill remained suspicious of theorists, and yet he attracted them in swarms. There is a wistful portrait of his friends (page 168) penned apropos of his doing his first sculpture in the round; we give it here in full as it is also a brisk sample of his style:

> My friends in the arts and crafts circles rather looked askance at me. I seemed to be deserting their homely fireside and going into brothels and dance-halls. They really are like that; they're terribly strait-laced and prim . . . there was something very emasculate and lacking in guts as well as other appurtenances about most of the products of the arts and crafts movement. You can *see* the boys don't drink; you can *see* they're not on speaking terms with the devil.

Gill put into his work all he knew, all he loved, with most intense concentration. One would like to say that the results of such life-long devotion were truly important. But are reforms as essentially good as they are novel? Of the Impressionists Renoir used to say, "They boast that they paint the shadows blue while others paint them black." Of the liturgical art movement that Gill leavened it may be similarly said: They rejoice at having replaced in their churches the neo-gothic style by the pseudo-byzantine.

JEAN CHARLOT.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. James Agee. Photographs by Walker Evans. Houghton Mifflin. $3.50.

THE TITLE is from the first verse of the forty-fourth chapter of Ecclesiasticus. But the allusion is evidently to verses 9-14, which begin, "And there are some of whom there is no memorial . . .," because the book is allegedly a study of three poor white "tenant families" of Alabama.

The book presents at times a fairly good picture of tenant farmers and their families, their life—if you can call it that—and the simple dignity and beauty that some of them retain in spite of the brutal conditions of that life. Mr. Agee has a real sympathy—and even love—for his subjects, and he is certainly a sensitive observer. So is Mr. Evans's camera. But the book is too repetitious, too obscure, too obsessed with irrelevant detail, and particularly too obsessed with the author's complex reactions to his subject and to everything else from Cézanne to Kafka to his own relatives.

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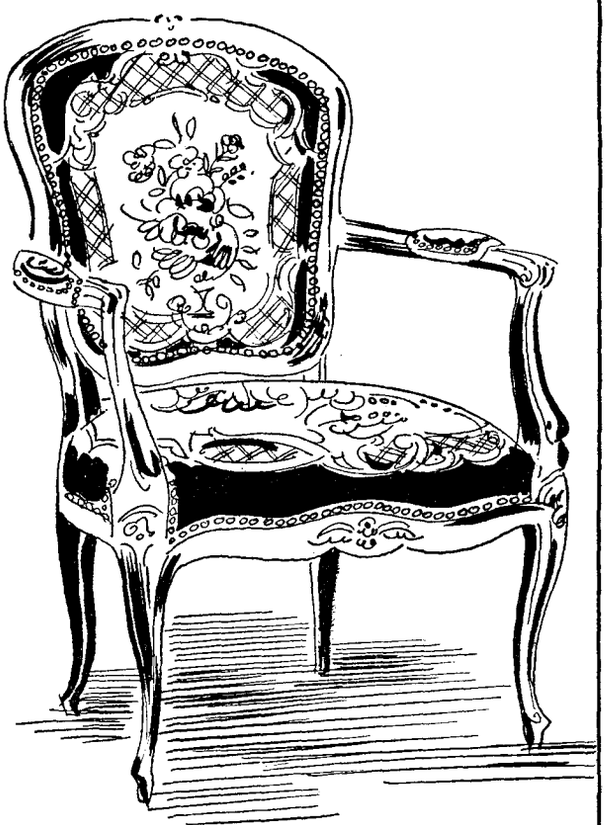

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Although the latter faults disqualify "Let Us Now" as a readable study of tenant farmers, they do add to the real interest of the book, which is as a study of its author, who—for my money—is in a much more tragic condition than any exploited sharecropper.

James Agee is a young Harvard graduate and a very "modern" poet (heavy quotes) with a musical, turgid, endless prose-poetry style that can, and frequently does, go on for two pages, but only one sentence, on the shape, color, texture, design and esthetic implications of a farmer's overalls. He can also get off a nice line like "The cow let out a comment like a giant wooden flute." He has some good ideas and a lot more bad ones, and all in all the most confused intellect and set of emotions that have come down the pike in several moons. He says he has "felt forms of allegiance or part-allegiance to Catholicism and to the communist party," but "I felt less and less at ease with them and I am done with them."

It is interesting that Mr. Agee should have been attracted to the two most disciplined, formal faiths of modern times, because what is most notable and lamentable about his book is the complete absence of discipline and form, whether literary, emotional or intellectual. With discipline Mr. Agee might be effective—either for good or bad.

JOHN C. CORT.

Labor Supply and National Defense. International Labor Office, Washington, D. C. $1.00.

HERE is a handbook worthy of attention from students of labor and government trends. The study is divided into two main parts: "the problems of labor supply created by the expansion of defense industries in wartime or in a period of national emergency"; "the information and administrative organization which are necessary if these problems are to be adequately solved." The countries discussed are as they should be, friend and foe alike: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa and the United States of America.

There is much speculation among scholars, the academic and the non-academic alike, and among labor leaders about the trend of our OPM and OPACS. Those who have read James Burnham's "The Managerial Revolution" might be frightened by the cold logic that moves the author to his estimates of government managerial machinery now in process of organization. I suggest that the careful critic give systematic attention to the trends analyzed in compact form in this handbook. In this way, fears and wishful thinking will give way to careful study of the world's social and economic trends.

GEORGE STREATOR.

FICTION

The Blind Man's House. Hugh Walpole. Doubleday. $2.50.

BLINDNESS is the real protagonist in this last novel from the prolific pen of the late Hugh Walpole. For the marital difficulties of the middle-aged Julius Cromwell resulted from his lack of sight and its effect on him and Celia, his young second wife. It, too, gave him an aloofness and mysteriousness, almost translated into a legend of omniscience, which affected the lives of all the other villager characters. In a study of a man of vigorous, huge and handsome build, blinded in the first World War, Walpole's imagination builds up a penetrating analysis which is real and moving, and gives the only distinction—a good and unusual one—to a pleasantly excursive novel.

The present war casts merely premonitory shadows—the Cromwells at the conclusion are preparing for an extensive Mediterranean cruise—and, if Julius, Celia and the villagers are typical, their musings on God, muddled and inconclusive, illustrate how thoroughly the English have dissociated themselves from the established church. Mr. Brennan, the minister, is of a pattern made familiar by the English novelist—believing in God but with no particular credo beyond that belief and no power, indeed no urge, to perform more than the conventional routine of his calling. Something of modern frankness about marital relationships creeps in, and not altogether necessarily. Occasionally characters, such as Jim Burke, are seen only in half-light, but the three Brennan children are delightfully portrayed and the reader regrets parting with them before their futures are resolved.

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI.

HISTORY

The Reconstruction of Europe; Talleyrand and the Congress of Vienna. Guglielmo Ferrero. Putnam. $3.50.

THIS history of the reconstruction of Europe after the fall of Napoleon's empire is a pragmatic attempt to influence our days' politics by historical writing. The liberal Italian historian, living as an exile in Switzerland, turns conservative in admiring Alexander I, Talleyrand and even Louis XVIII, and asking us to learn from them the way out of the difficulties of 1941. Not the night of reaction fell over Europe, as we are often told, but wise politicians created a reconstruction which granted to war-torn Europe a century of relatively peaceful life.

This reviewer believes heartily in deepening the understanding of our own times by a broad study of history and he agrees in many parallels between the continental conquest of the French and the German "usurper." In an article "Napoleonic Pattern" (THE COMMONWEAL, August 2, 1940) he himself has demonstrated several similarities between the European situation of 1810 and that of a hundred and thirty years after.

Nevertheless I cannot help the feeling that Ferrero overdoes a sound comparison. History does not repeat itself mechanically. You can't give useful advice to our politicians by isolating the parallels and overlooking the differences. Europe is not an isolated continent, which you can still "set in equilibrium" without dealing with the whole world situation. You can't ignore furthermore the leveling of the articulated nations by the destruction of the upper classes, or at least of their prestige. As Hitler can't make war with the methods of Napoleon, also the new Alexander (Roosevelt to Ferrero) and the new Talleyrand would have to adopt new methods and weapons in order to grant Europe a new century of peace.

MAX FISCHER.

BRIEFER

The Men Around Churchill. René Kraus. Lippincott. $3.00.

SKETCHY, impressionistic studies of the men directing England's destinies in the battle against Hitler from labor leader Ernest Bevin to His Majesty, George VI. From this account they appear to be men of wide accomplishments. Bevin, ex-farm-hand, ex-bus-boy, ex-street-car conductor, is presented as Britain's man of the future.

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The Inner Forum

RECENT private correspondence from France presents two interesting documents concerning the reaction of the Church in that country to the country's present plight. The Feast of the Sacred Heart, which took place on June 20 this year, has always excited more popular interest and devotion in France than in this country. It has long been the custom for bishops to dedicate their dioceses to the Sacred Heart on the occasion of this Feast, and special evening devotion services are usually held for the purpose.

This year the Most Rev. Jules Saliège, Archbishop of Toulouse, made a special effort to signalize the Feast and the ceremony of dedication connected with the Feast. Archbishop Saliège is remarkable in the French hierarchy for the fact that his life previous to his being made a member of the hierarchy was devoted to the education of youth, particularly of youth destined for the priesthood. He has long been celebrated as a retreat master and, even after becoming Archbishop, often conducted retreats for the Catholic students at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris. Archbishop Saliège is 71 years of age and has an infirmity which makes it very difficult for him to speak.

The Sunday before the Feast of the Sacred Heart he prepared a letter on the "Anguish of the Church in France," of which the following is a significant paragraph:

"It is the future of the Christian spirit which is at stake in this hour, a future that may extend over centuries. Many priests, many Catholics do not realize this. That is why I forewarn them, I officially put them on notice. May they take care not to let themselves be impregnated by errors which have been condemned, or carried away by words the meaning of which is vague and unprecise. Their mission is to save and to spread the Christian spirit. May they keep that spirit whole in themselves, without permitting it to become corrupt or mixed. There is no reading more suited to the moment than the reading of the Gospels. There is nothing more serious than the Gospels, nothing more solid, nothing more contemporary than these pages, which are at once human and divine. Let us impregnate ourselves with the Gospels. Let us read St. Paul and tell ourselves that since the fall of the Roman Empire, Catholics have had no more beautiful, no greater mission—the salvation of the world, not through the clericalism of which the Church disapproves and of which we want nothing at any price, but the salvation of the world through the Cross of Jesus Christ, the manifestation and the symbol of infinite love."

Those who are familiar with recent French history and have followed day-by-day events in the France of Marshal Pétain will understand what it is against which the Archbishop was trying to warn his people.

On the day of the Feast itself, at the evening services of dedication, Archbishop Saliège had the following prayer read. He had composed it for the occasion, with special care, and the services at which it was read were those held at the Cathedral of Toulouse.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, most loving and most lovable Heart, most tender and most compassionate Heart,

"On this twentieth day of June, 1941,

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Street .....

City .....

"I dedicate to You my diocese, its priests and its faithful.

"I dedicate to You the families, the schools, the world of labor, the world of thought, the world of prayer.

"I dedicate to You the parishes, the seminaries, youth.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, have pity on us. Have pity on our prisoners. Have pity on all those who suffer, whatever their race, their religion, their nationality.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, have pity on France, who loves You, and whom You love. Bestow upon her leaders an exact sense of her Christian mission in the world and the conviction that her fate is altogether bound up in the fate of the Catholic and Roman religion.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the midst of the dangers which are threatening the Faith, Catholic France hastens back to You. Make firm and watchful both pastors and sheep, and make more unshakable than ever the bond of all to the Chair of Peter and to *your* Cross, sign and symbol of your Heart, to *your* cross outside of which there is no salvation for mankind.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, I beg of You, do not permit the chivalrous soul of France to become the prey of error, of evil deeds and of brutality. Do not permit that the dignity of the human person and the right which that person possesses from its Creator, that the dignity of labor which is not an article of trade, that the dignity of the family which is not merely a supplier of children, that the dignity of the Fatherland desired by God which is not an idol, should never disappear from a world from which Your kingdom is banished.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, Catholic Action, so full of beneficence, is at the service of Your merciful designs. It forms an integrating part of the Church. This is why priests and faithful, instructed in the requirements of the apostolate, and in the face of the magnificent example given to them by their Belgian brothers, have decided to maintain and to propagate that Action. May its various movements continue, then, and develop and act in that spirit of *true* collaboration which they have always shown.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, I dedicate to You the Catholic Action of my diocese.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, I have confidence in You.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, France has confidence in You.

"In this hour, to the extent that I am able, I dedicate to You my country.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, France belongs to You in gratitude, in repentance, in hope and in love. Amen."

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